

critical digest

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This Week

Pictures in The Hallway-Playhouse
9/16. 8 Sunday afternoons & evenings to 10/7. Reading of Sean O Casey study. With Aline MacMahon, Staats Cotsworth.

Camille-Cherry Lane 9/18. Wayne Richardson's revival of Dumas classic. With Colleen Dewhurst.

Next Week

Arms and the Man-Downtown-85 E 4-9/24... Take A Giant Step-Jan Hus 9/25... Lower Depths-Contemporary-15-2nd Av 9/25... Judy Garland Show-Palace 9/26.

Phoenix Plans

Phoenix will present American Shakespeare Festival, Stratford, Conn. productions of Measure for Measure starting Feb 19, and Taming of Shrew-Mar 19.

Digests of Current NYC Reviews

Rendezvous in Wien-Barbizon Plaza - presented in German by Vienna's Theater in-der Josefstadt for 10 performance run was rated by Morton, Times, as fairly elementary humor. Fritz Eckhardt's comedy becomes topheavy with plot early in the show, and the critic felt it was a tribute to the players that they could pass back and forth the rhinestone gags of the script as if they were gems of diamond wit. Morton hopes that on group's next visit they will present Molnar or Schnitzler instead.

New Faces , which opened when Watts, Post, was abroad, did not impress reviewer when caught. He only liked 2 of the numbers , and three of the female new faces. He was un receptive to the talents of T. C. Jones, but admitted that audience enjoyed the female impersonator.

Hits Revisited

The Most Happy Fella performance by Richard Torigi, who portrays title role at matinees was approved by Jess, Variety. The personal warmth of the aging vineyard owner is ably projected by Torigi's characterization and quality songstering. Trade paper mugg noted that at matinee covered cooling system was inadequate.

Summer Tryout

Affair of Murder, mystery play by Mignon G. Eberhart tried at Mt Kisco, NY, fails to build tension and suspense, pans Dash, Womens Wear. Performances were rough and disappointing. Considerable reconstruction would be necessary for a Broadway try.

Resolutions

Both McClain, Journal American, and Chapman, News, noted at season's start, that they CANNOT get seats for My Fair Lady, so save the stamps.

Auntie Mame benefit audiences will be given a curtain speech before the start of play to "thaw" them. Producers Robert Fryer and Lawrence Carr found that this method warmed up the usually cold benefit houses. Play starring Rosalind Russell already has 200 benefits booked. Method was used by producers for Desk Set.

Plays

Inherit the Wind moved re-opening date forward to Sept 15, in deference to Jewish religious holiday Sept 14... Hateful of Rain moved to Plymouth... Cat On a Hot Tin Roof closes Nov 26 and goes on national tour... Child of Fortune to open Nov 13 at Royale, The Matchmaker moving same date to Booth. ... David Merrick will present Romanoff and Juliet, current London comedy hit by and with Peter Ustinov, in NYC in 1957.

Players

Pippa Scott will make NY debut in leading role of Child of Fortune... Laurinda Barret to debut in Too Late the Phalarope... James Gardiner, co-producer Plain and Fancy, to become a night-club performer... Tom Donnelly, Washington News, rumored to win drama critic post of World - Telegram-Sun, vacated by William Hawkins... Edna Best withdrew from Reluctant Debutante due to illness... Julie Andrews, My Fair Lady, missed another performance due to throat ailment, Lola Fisher subbed. ... Kay Medford to be featured in A Hole in the Head due Feb 27... Jane Kean to replace Jayne Mansfield, Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter, Sept 17... Neva Patterson and Laurence Hugo joined Double in Hearts... Cathleen Nesbitt to leave My Fair Lady Sept 29 to join The Sleeping Prince... Ruth White, Katherine Raht in The Happiest Millionaire... Anita Webb replaces Jean Stapleton, Damn Yankee. Stapleton to Bells Are Ringing cast.

Other Broadways

Old Vic company left Liverpool via air to Montreal where it opens Sept 17... Dallas '56 season opens Nov 11 with Stalin Allee a new play by Frederick Kohner and Albert Mannheimer... Wilmington booking of Long Day's Journey Into Night for Oct 10-13 canceled to allow more rehearsal time.

Summer Playhouses

The Heiress with Basil Rathbone plays 2 week run at Paper Mill Playhouse, Millburn, NJ... Teahouse of August Moon plays 3 weeks at Lambertsville, NJ... John Houseman signed as director of American Shakespeare Festival, Conn, for next 3 years.

Theatre TV Notes

Julie Andrews will star in CBS TV production of "Cinderella", a musical to be written and produced by Rodgers and Hammerstein in Feb.

Theatre Film Notes

Shirley Booth and Anthony Perkins will star in Paramount film version of The Matchmaker... Perkins and Sophia Loren will star in film version of Desire Under the Elms, also planned by Paramount... 20th Century Fox to pay \$100,000 for screen rights to Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter starring Jayne Mansfield... Oedipus Rex filmed at Shakespearean Festival, Stratford, Ontario, will be released in US in fall, and will be shown in Sept at Edinburgh Festival.



OFF
BROADWAY

Betty Field and Uta Hagen join the leading players who will appear Off-Broadway this season. Betty Field will star in David Ross' production of The Sea-Gull at the 4th St, now scheduled to open Oct 22... Uta Hagen will return to Phoenix as lead in The Good Woman of Setzuan opening Dec 11.

Fischer Hall, W 57, to be site of Bruce Gorman's Off Broadway Ticket Office which will handle ducats for producers at no extra service charge for ticket buyers. Absalom, Take A Giant Step and Portrait of Dorian Gray are first productions to use service.

Capek's The Makropoulos Secret is being revived at Provincetown by TSR Productions, Jean Houston in the lead, and directed by Bob Murphy... Lower Depths production which opened in spring, will be repeated at Contemporary Theatre, 15-2nd Av, starting Sept 25... The Shadowed Years by Kenneth Silva will be presented at Open Stages, 15-2nd Av... Arms and Man opening moved forward to Sept 25... Broadway Chapel Players to present Fry's Thor With Angels starting Oct 14... Henri Gheon's The Comedian will be presented by Blackfriar's in mid-Oct.

Nobody's Child at Open Stages pan ned by RLA, Womens Wear as unimpressive from writing and acting standpoints.

No Exit at Theatre East added another pro notice to its file. Geor, Variety, rated it as well-mounted, piquant theatre.

THEATRE
OUT OF
TOWN



The Boy Friend continues in Los Angeles... Inherit the Wind with Melvyn Douglas has moved to Portland... San Francisco has choice of The Lark, Damn Yankees and Witness for the Prosecution... The Pajama Game is in Toronto

VAUDEVILLE

&

BURLESQUE

Judy Garland and Her All Variety Show opens Sept 26 at Palace will be staged by Charles Walters, with special musical numbers by Roger Edens, Nora Kovach, Istvan Rabovsky, Pompoff, Thedy and Family featured in show. New current bill at Palace headed by Joy Hodges, Sibyl Bowan, Ben Beri, Fred Lowery.

NYC License Bureau considering application of Tom Phillips to stage burlesque shows at Public Theatre, 2nd Av and 4th St.

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GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

BARD VIEWS... "Normal" psychology, rather than "abnormal" psychology, could also be applied to Shakespeare's "difficult" plays, suggests Kerr, Herald Tribune. Making Shakespeare an embryo psychiatrist puts a strain on the actor which often leaves little energy left for the speeches, critic notes... Atkinson, Times, calls for a moratorium on the question of who wrote Shakespeare's plays. Reviewer admits he is a Shakespeare-of-Stratford satellite. It took more than high birth and a college education to create a poet like Shakespeare, critic points out. It took genius; God ought to get some credit here.

COLUMN TIPS... Constance Brigham quit as Julie Andrews, My Fair Lady, understudy, one day prior to later's illness, Winchell reports... Understudy Patty Wickes got her chance when Kay Medford, Mr. Wonderful, overslept Saturday afternoon, hears Wilson Arthur Miller to write Broadway play for his new wife, notes Watt.

US-USSR LEGIT SWAP... US State Dept considering formal approval of an exchange of US and Soviet artists suggested by producer Billy Rose. He told Gilbert, Variety, that he expects okay from Dulles and that first exchanges would get under way by Jan 1, 1958. Exchange would be on a non-profit basis and any profits would go to charity. Rose hopes than a swap of music and laughter may ease the tension.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... Buying tickets at the box office is the secret weapon a News reader uses to see all the hits... C. D. subscriber finds it a pity that those rich enough to pay scalper's prices for tickets could not support theatre more by buying ducats to shows not doing as well as the hits.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Phoenix season looks like a particularly interesting one, predicts Watts, Post... The "250,000" amateur groups in US are a good market for dramatists, suggests Coleman, Mirror... With 200 benefits for Auntie Mame, producers could afford to hire Jackie Gleason to "warm" audiences up, notes Chapman, News.

THREE TITANS... Shaw, O'Neill and O'Casey, three titans of drama, have not been forgotten this season on Broadway, cheers Watts, Post. Noting the Shaw and O'Neill plays to be presented this season critic highly recommended the special Sunday readings at Playhouse starting Sept 16 of O'Casey's Pictures in the Hallway. Nothing finer has been written in our time than this series of gay, sad, heroic, tender and sardonic memoirs.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Diana Van Der Vlis, blonde newcomer who won leading role in The Happiest Millionaire, is busy rehearsing, taking boxing lessons from Lou Nova and learning how to treat alligators, Farnsworth, Journal American, learned.



"PROS & CONS BY T. M. K."

The American Shakespeare Festival, Stratford, Conn. has much to be proud of at the close of its second season. This summer's productions of Taming of the Shrew, Measure for Measure, and King John were properly acclaimed by the critics. The first two were solidly supported by the ticket buyers.

Taming of the Shrew viewed at season's end was a lively, well-cast, hoked-up version of the classic comedy. Purists may argue with some of the effects added, but no one will argue that the result was professional theatre.

The physical plant is an important factor in the group's success that many seem to take for granted. The comfortable theatre erected at a cost of \$1 million is the only new legit theatre built in the east in 30 or more years. The recessed lighting, perfect sound, comfortable seats, efficient air-cooling, the beautiful lobby and lounge are a credit to their designers. All aid in putting the theatre-goer in a receptive mood.

The recognition from the Phoenix which will bring the American Shakespeare Festival productions of Taming of the Shrew and Measure for Measure to New York in Feb and Mar 1957 is well-deserved.

The only sad note is that the handsome Stratford playhouse will only be in use 3 months a year. Certainly the enterprise which moved the group to its present position in such a short time can evolve a plan to use the new theatre more fully.

* * *

If the buyer of a high priced charity ticket feels disgruntled after he has bought the ticket and before the show starts, it does not seem the role of the producer to make him feel any better. Instead of coming to the theatre to gripe, the disgruntled charity ticket buyer could give his ducat to a theatre fan who would enjoy the show. Thus two charities would be aided at the price of one.

* * *

An amazing number of newcomers will make their NY debuts this season. Producers are wise in forever searching and hiring new faces. But would be actors and actresses across the country should not take this as a sign to rush to NY. There are still thousands in NY from all over the country who never got nearer to Broadway than a balcony seat.

* * *

Off Broadway which has matured in the last few years should not let their success go to their ticket prices. The foundation of the movement was in part due to the fact that theatre-fans could see a good show at reasonable prices. But with the advent of stars willing to work Off-Broadway many producers have upped the seat prices to where they near Broadway scales. Some might question why if the stars are working at Off Broadway pay rates the higher prices are necessary. Others may decide that the price-scale is so close they may as well see a Broadway show. The Off-Broadway producer would be wise to watch his ticket prices.

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London Theatre



Plays

Fanny with Robert Morley will open Nov 15 at Drury Lane... Lend an Ear with Carol Channing will be presented this season, Gowar Champion to direct. ... Anthony Ireland will present Happy Landings by Patrick Cargill and Jack Bele... Gracie Fields to star in ABC-TV production of Barrie's The Old Lady shows her Medals Nov 4... "Stage" ad: "Notice to Authors-- Wanted-- A Really Sensational & Daring Sex Play. Must Have Box Office Appeal & Title. Apply Bernard Woolley, Limited, Vaudeville House, Bolton, Lancs."

Players

Perlita Neilson, who appeared in NY in Lace on Her Petticoat, chosen from 400 applicants for Diary of Anne Frank. ... George Moon to sub for Max Wall, Pajama Game, during later's vacation ... Ann Todd to be featured in John Clement's production of Doctor's Dilemma due Oct 4 at Sayville... Anne Crawford has returned to cast of Spider's Web at Savoy after 3 week's illness.

Comments

Secrecy all too frequently veils the withdrawal of a play and replacements are made behind the public's back without a word creeping into the press, notes "Stage". It is only fair that the public should be told when the stars are out of the cast. If the management fears a fall in sales, they should engage a name player when star is out.

Digests of London Reviews

Toward Zero, Agatha Christie's adaptation of her own mystery, presented at St. James, was mildly received. Darlington, Tribune, found it clumsy, not first class Christie. He did not that audience enjoyed it and predicted it would run for a long time. Times reviewer thought it a fair specimen, though he noted conclusion came too quickly.

Timon of Athens, Old Vic production starring Ralph Richardson, was rated as a vehicle for the star by Darlington, Tribune, who noted that other players were reduced to shadows. Agreeing with Times critic that Shakespeare's play is among his worst, the latter critic praised inventive direction of Michael Bentall as well as Richardson's central performance.

Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle, Mother Courage and The Recruiting Officer presents a kind of theatre for which we (of Broadway & West End) have lost our taste, comments Tynan, Observer. Brecht wrote morality plays and directed them as such. He brings the wide canvas and the eagle-eye's view back to a theatre hypnotised by keyhole impressionism and worm-s eye foreshortening, critic summed up.

Hold the Line, a Russian bedroom farce presented at Unity minus bedroom scenes, was rated as obvious fun by C. S., Stage. Good humored naivete of plot and characters has certain charm, but not enough for 3 acts.

Mr. Bolfray, James Bridie's play at Aldwych with Alastair Sim, was rated as pointless by Tynan, Observer.

" THEATRE

CALENDAR "

Saint Joan-Phoenix 9/11
Pictures at Exhibition-Plashouse 9/16
Lower Depths-Contemporary 9/16
Camille- Cherry Lane 9/16

Sleeping Prince-Coronet 11/1
Long Day Journey-Hayes 11/7
City Center- 11/7
Bass House in Naples- 11/8
Shoestring '57-Carnegie Play-11/7
Protective Custody- 11/7

ICEMAN COMETH
Circle \$3.60
MAN DESTINY
Downtown \$3.60
NOSODY CHILD
Open Stage
NO EXIT
T. East \$3.30
PIC DOR GRAY
Bleeker St
3 PENNY OPERA
DE Lys \$4.80
UNCLE VANYA
4th St
WORLD OYSTER
Actors Playhouse

5 Sher Sq
OR 5-9437
6 Pros-Times, Trib, Mir, J. Am, WTB&S, Post
2 Pro-Times, Post
2 Con-Variety, Women's Wear
15-2nd Av
TR 4-4735
211 E 60
TE 2-9220
145 Bk
WA 9-8730
121 Chris
WA 4-8782
83 E 4
OR 4-2710
100-THAV S
OR 5-1036
5 Con-Trib, Post, Times, Variety, Women's Wear

Take a Giant Step-Jan Hus 9/25
Judy Garland Show-Palace 9/26
Abastorm-Fischer Hall 9/27
Loud Red Patrick-Ambassador-10/3
Harbor Lights-Plashouse 10/4
6 Finger 5 Finger GI-Lonergan 10/8
Mr. Candido-G. Mews 10/8
Reluctant Debutante-Millier 10/10
Daisy Miller-Equity Libr 10/10
Too Late-Pharos-Beasco 10/11
Thor With Angels-Bway Chapel 10/14
Moon McBogoton-7-Bijou 10/15
Double in Hearts-Golden 10/16
Hamlet-Shakespeare's 10/17
Apple Cart- Plymouth 10/18
Happy Art Hill-Fischer Hall 10/7
Lil Abner- St. James 10/22
See Gull- 4th St 10/22
Richard III-Old Vic W. Garden 10/23
Johnny Johnston-Carnegie Theat. 10/23
Separate Tables-Music Box-10/25
Separate Millions-Barronmore 10/29
Diary of Scoundrel-Phoenix 10/30
Major Barbara-Beck-10/30
Auntie Mame-Broadhurst 10/31

9/11-ABC-Antigone with Claude Raines, Marisa Pavan on Kaiser Hour
10/6- CBS- You're The Top-Cole Porter Festival-Shirley Jones, etc.-Ford Hour
10/26- NBC- Born Yesterday with Mary Martin- Evans Show
11/24- NBC- High Button Shoes with Nanette Fabray
11/25- NBC- Man and Superman with Maurice Evans on Evans Show
3/57-NBC- Romeo & Juliet by Old Vic
4/57- NBC- Great Sebastians with the Lunts

"CD VIEWS CURRENT SHOWS"

Damn Yankees, Diary Anne Frank, Inherit the Wind

No Exit, Iceman Cometh, Uncle Vanya

MIDDLE NIGHT, Fanny
Worlds My Oyster

"TV THEATRE PROGRAMS "

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PROS

CONS

